



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 7, 2003

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ALIEN SMUGGLER SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS PRISON AFTER A JURY FOUND HIM GUILTY OF ASSAULTING A FEDERAL OFFICER WITH A DEADLY WEAPON AND ALIEN SMUGGLING.

TUCSON, ARIZONA –The United States Attorneys Office for the District of Arizona, announced that on May 7, 2003, Alejandro Soto-Santos, DOB 04/24/75, of Huauchinago, Puebla, Mexico, was sentenced to 5 years prison, by United States District Judge John M. Roll, in Tucson, Arizona.

This case began on April 25, 2002, when Border Patrol Agent Jose Molina was conducting surveillance of two abandoned vehicles left on the northbound side of highway I-19 just one kilometer north of the Border Patrol checkpoint in Rio Rico, Arizona. As Agent Molina was laying in the bushes, he heard rustling of the bushes and a car door closing. As the agent approached the vehicle on the shoulder approximately two feet from the traffic lanes, the headlights of a Daihatsu hatchback came on. As the car began moving towards the agent, Agent Molina shined a flashlight at the vehicle and identified himself as a border patrol agent, telling the driver to stop in both English and Spanish. When the car continued driving towards Agent Molina, he drew his service weapon and continued to tell the driver to stop. When the vehicle kept moving forward and got within five feet of Agent Molina, the agent fired one round at the driver,

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striking the fender, and jumped out of harm's way. The defendant then drove his vehicle onto the highway and continued northbound. Other Border Patrol agents were able to stop the vehicle a few miles away from the site of the assault. In the Daihatsu, agents found seven illegal aliens.

Alejandro Soto-Santos had been found guilty by a jury on January 17, 2003 of three counts of Transportation of Illegal Aliens and one count of Assault on a Federal Officer with a Deadly Weapon.

In sentencing the defendant, the district court found that the defendant had endangered and assaulted Border Patrol Agent Jose Molina who had only been out there doing his job and that the defendant could have pulled onto the highway instead of driving straight at the agent.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Border Patrol.

The prosecution was handled by Serra M. Tsethlikai, Assistant United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-02-0747-TUC-JMR
RELEASE NUMBER: 2003-078

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